

California Polytechnic State University

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### **Cal Poly Arts Leaps Into New Season With Ukranian Dancers Sept. 22**

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA – The Virsky Ukrainian National Dance company, famous for their exquisitely colorful and athletic staging of Ukrainian folk dancing, opens the new 2004/05 Cal Poly Arts season on Wednesday, September 22, 2004 at 8 p.m. in the Christopher Cohan Center.

Hailed as “great dancing by any definition” by the New York Times, the Company's 85 gravity-defying dancers capture the pride and passion of the centuries-old culture.

Unrivaled in bravura and accomplishment, dancers literally leap with the joy of their art, embracing the beauty of their native Ukraine, the wisdom of its people, and the folk traditions of humor and optimism.

Founder Pavlo Virsky trained as a ballet dancer and performed as a soloist with a number of theaters in the old Soviet Union, where he also staged classical ballets. However, the Ukrainian Virsky became fascinated by the concept of folk dancing, which he believed to portray a people's culture and soul.

Along with another well-known Ukrainian ballet-master, colleague Mykola Bolotov, Virsky brought together a group of folk dancers in 1937 that was known as “Ukraine's Song and Dance Company.”

Under Virsky's guidance, the ensemble quickly matured into a highly professional dance company and was renamed “Virsky – The Ukrainian National Dance Company” in 1940.

In the decades that followed, Virsky Ukrainian National Dance Company's art has won the hearts of reviewers and fans around the world and Pavlo Virsky was awarded many top honors before his death in 1975.

Current Artistic Director Myroslav Vantukh – Virsky's disciple and an expert in folk traditions and ethnography – has been heading the

ensemble since 1980 with the primary goal of the careful preservation and development of folk dancing as choreographic art.

The expressiveness of the dancers, precise moves, a bright palette of costumes, as well as a wealth of tunes, are characteristic features of the ensemble's first-class performances and new dances are continually added to the repertoire.

In addition to U.S. engagements, the group has toured throughout Europe as well as Canada, Columbia, China, Cuba, Korea, Mexico, Mongolia, and Peru. The foreign press has been unanimous about the high artistic and professional qualities of the company.

The company's director Vantukh's continuing dedication to the Ukrainian folk culture and dance genre is also evident in the Ballet School of the Ukrainian National Dance Company, a choreographic school for children.

Tickets for the performance range from \$26 - \$38, with student discounts available, and may be purchased at the Performing Arts Ticket Office, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays. To order by phone, call 805/756-2787; to order by fax: 805/756-6088. Order on-line at [www.pacslo.org](http://www.pacslo.org).

Single tickets go on sale to the public as of September 7, 2004. VIRSKY tickets are also available now at a discount when ordered as part of a "4 or more events" Cal Poly Arts subscription. Call the Ticket Office for details or visit [www.calpolyarts.org](http://www.calpolyarts.org) for subscription information.

Sponsored by James and Esther Landreth.

For audio and video samples of Cal Poly Arts events, visit [www.calpolyarts.org](http://www.calpolyarts.org).

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